

THE VOICE OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

# TIMBER BULLETIN

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

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VOLUME 73

A white logging truck is shown from a front-three-quarter view, driving on a snowy road. The truck's trailer is heavily loaded with logs, secured with metal mesh. The background consists of a dense forest of bare trees and evergreens under a cloudy sky. The truck has two tall exhaust stacks and orange lights on the roof and fenders.

**Smooth Transitions -  
Pelland Logging  
Changes to SFIA  
Program Released**



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# TIMBER BULLETIN

Volume 73  
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Duluth, Minnesota

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### ON THE COVER

Steve Grotberg of Pelland Logging drives a load of black spruce pulp on the Holstrum Spur, headed for the PCA mill in International Falls. For more on Pelland Logging, turn to page 8.

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It's Minnesota cold (that's pretty cold) as I write this column. The frozen ground has given many of us excellent winter logging conditions, a nice change from the last two winters. Let's hope we can get a few more weeks of good logging weather.

As spring approaches, so will training opportunities. It is professional training, combined with day-to-day logging experience that makes us better loggers. MLEP classes fill up fast, so don't forget to register early.

The Minnesota legislative session is underway. Our

## President's Column



organization's executive vice president Wayne Brandt is in St. Paul, engaging lawmakers concerning issues that affect

our industries. As always, his biggest challenge will be trying to get lawmakers on both sides to support issues that will have a positive outcome for our industry.

Putting safety above production is paramount for a successful business. Let's all continue to make each day a safe day, so that we can return home to our family each evening.

*David Berthiaume*

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**W**ith Congressman Rick Nolan announcing his retirement we will be in for a wild ride as candidates seek this open seat. In 2016 this was the most expensive race for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives anywhere in the country. This year's race will be even more expensive.

The 8th Congressional District covers most of the forestland in our state and we look to whomever holds the seat to be an advocate for us. Congressman Nolan has been a

## Executive Vice President's Column

strong and effective advocate for our issues. I first got to know



Congressman Nolan when he served in Congress representing portions of north central and west central Minnesota

where I grew up. After leaving the Congress the first time he then was in business for over thirty years before being elected again in 2014.

From his time in Congress in the seventies he knew how to get things done and applied that knowledge to his most recent service. He knew how the Congress worked back in the good old days when you could actually get some things done in Washington, D.C.

The best example of this from our perspective was getting the Interstate 35 truck weight exemption that allows us to haul on the freeway from Duluth to MN Highway 210. He worked with other members of Congress, primarily republicans, from around the country who had similar issues and prevailed in having an amendment adopted on the floor of the House of Representatives to solve our and their problems.

Congressman Nolan is a good guy who was in our business for a number of years with a sawmill and pallet shop. He has been effective and I will miss him when he completes his term.



New housing construction is a primary driver of demand for building products. After dipping from over 2 million starts in the mid-2000's to a low of five hundred thousand they rebounded to 1.2 million in 2017. This is below the average of the past nearly forty years of 1.35 million but still heading in the right direction.

Without demand for our finished products there isn't demand for wood—as we've seen too often.

Now, if the paper business would only improve.



We've gotten some calls in the office about truck safety in wood yards. There's a lot going on at mill sites and wood yards when trucks arrive to deliver their loads. People, loaders, trains, passenger vehicles and other trucks are all moving around these locations. Drivers need to be hyper alert in these situations.

Take a minute to review safety in the wood yards with your drivers and remind your contract haulers to do the same. You won't regret it.



The DNR is nearing completion of their Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis (STHA) which Governor Dayton directed to be conducted and the Legislature funded last year. A draft report has been circulated and TPA has provided comments.

This has been a modeling project in which different scenarios with different restrictions and preferences were projected over a one hundred year time horizon. The actual work was performed by Mason, Bruce & Girard, a well-respected forestry consulting firm, at the DNR's direction.

We've done this same modeling in our office a number of times through the years. The DNR's draft report shows what we know. The DNR can harvest in the 1.2 million cord range for the next 15–20 years. This level of modeled harvest includes reductions for leave tree guidelines, RMZ's, endangered species restrictions and other considerations. The numbers then settle in somewhat lower depending on the assumptions that you use for

growth, yield and other factors.

It's important to note that not all of the 1.2 million cord modeled volume will make a commercial timber sale. Some if it is species with limited markets, some of it will be of too poor quality and some of it may not make a commercial sale for other reasons.

There are a couple of other model runs with significant additional restrictions that show lower levels in the six hundred thousand cord range.

The report and recommendations from the DNR for future harvest levels will be presented to Governor Dayton soon. You can imagine the battles inside the DNR as the anti-harvesting crowd seeks to drive the numbers down.

The DNR should use the 1.2 million cord level as it restarts its SFRMP planning process, understanding that it will go down for the reasons described above. The SFRMP's are ten-year plans. Clearly, getting state lands back in shape and productive utilizing the higher number as a starting point is the way to go.

In another ten years the DNR should conduct another similar analysis for the next update of SFRMP's. Maybe we'll be right that the growth and yield numbers are too low. Maybe the environmental community will be right that climate change, invasive species and other issues will reduce the forests' capacity.

In any event the number picked will only guide DNR planning and outputs for ten years and then they can readjust with more and better information.



And now, as Paul Harvey used to say, it's time for the rest of the story.

Didn't the announcement from MnDOT suspending all overweight and oversize truck permits statewide for the Super Bowl seem odd? It sure did to us as Ray Higgins and I went to work to get the order changed. After numerous calls with MnDOT, the State Patrol's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Staff and even members of the Super Bowl Organizing Committee that I know, we got it changed for log trucks.

But the question we had a hard time getting an answer to was always why? If you could drive a truck on I-35W or I-94 that didn't require an overweight or oversize permit right past US Bank Stadium, why couldn't you take a load of wood that needed a permit from Blackduck to Bemidji or Cook to Cloquet? The supposed reason for the permit suspension was concerns about Super Bowl security. Huh?

Without divulging any sources, here's the reason: There were so many private planes flying people in for the Super Bowl that there wasn't room to park them all at Twin Cities airports. So the planes that didn't have space had to go to regional airports such as St. Cloud, Mankato, Rochester, Duluth, Brainerd, etc. The Super Bowl attendees on those planes then had to be driven to the Twin Cities for the game. I'm guessing they didn't travel in pickup trucks.

As we learned—and I believe it—the NFL did not want any of these bigwigs inconvenienced by getting stuck behind a truck that was oversize or overweight on their way to the game.

Yup.

Our thanks to MnDOT, the State Patrol, and our contacts on the Super Bowl Organizing Committee for promptly resolving this issue when we contacted them.

And that's the rest of the story.



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## Member Feature...



Mike Pelland Sr. and Mike Pelland Jr.

# Smooth Transitions

by Ray Higgins

**M**ike Pelland and his son Mike Jr. stood on the landing of their DNR logging job east of Effie and shared a laugh over the cut-to-length forwarder beside them. Longtime users of conventional logging machines, last fall they decided to add the forwarder, as well as a cut-to-length processor, to go along with their feller buncher, stroke delimeter, loader/slasher, and a couple of skidders.

The catalyst for the purchase was the last two warmer-than-normal winters, which made it difficult to access timber they were

planning to harvest. In fact, this year the Pellands had to return to an adjacent site owned by Molpus Woodlands for the third year in a row, because the warm weather the last two winters wouldn't allow them to get the job finished.

"Last winter we were down in this area," Pelland says, "and we were picking up pockets of wood on this job here and there. There was a bunch of popple that we cut and piled up on top of the hill. Keep in mind we had this road open for about a month and a half, tramping it and plowing it, tramping it and

plowing it. We loaded the first load of pole wood on the truck, he came down the road, turned the corner, and it was so warm, and the road had become so soft, down went the trailer. So for the next day and a half, I borrowed mats from Brad Lovdahl, and I hauled all of my mats down here from home. We had 55 mats across that swamp so we could get that truck and the wood out of there."

Having to change the plan is nothing new to any Minnesota logger, Pelland included. It's part of doing business.



“One year, Chuck Hughes at Boise and I sat down and we planned every move, and every chunk of wood we were going to cut, at the beginning of the winter,” Pelland says. “And at the end of the winter we never did one thing that we planned on doing. Mother Nature changed our mind.”

Now, the Pellands are hoping the lighter cut-to-length equipment, in addition to their conventional operation, will allow them to continue to keep working, even when the winters are warmer than is optimal. That’s ironic, because years ago, Mike Sr. had been advised to stay away from using cut-to-length machines. As a result, he’d vowed to quit the business if one ever showed up on his logging job. But now, Mike Jr. has persuaded his father into giving it a try.

“I already proved him wrong when he didn’t quit when we bought it,” Michael needled. “Next I’m going to prove that we can get good production with it.”

Logging has been in Mike’s family for decades. Appropriately, he grew up in the town of Pelland, along the Canadian border, just west of International Falls, at the “Y” where Minnesota Highway 71 meets Highway 11, at the confluence of the Rainy and Littlefork rivers. The town is named for Mike’s grandfather, Frederick Pelland, and his uncle Elmer, who’d settled there.

Mike’s dad, Ira, was a logger, select-cutting balm out of aspen for the Minnesota and Ontario paper mill—“Mando”—in International Falls as far back as the 1950s. Mike, along with his four brothers, helped out their dad in the woods at an early age.

“When I was twelve or thirteen,” Mike recalls, “my dad would give me a broken axe handle and told me to knock the dead limbs off the balsam trees. That was my job in the summer.

“He never gave me anything sharp,” Pelland joked. “He was scared I was going to cut myself!”

When it was time to graduate from Indus High School—just west of the town in Birchdale—in 1971, Mike headed east to International Falls to attend Rainy River Junior College. But that didn’t last long.

“I went and registered,” he says,



Dwight Swang harvests black spruce with a Tigercat 822 feller buncher.

“and when I found out I had to take biology, I never went back.”

Pelland had worked over the summer in a plastics factory, but “I just about went stir crazy not being outside,” he says, and that was the end of that. Instead, he approached his neighbor, Raymond Wright, about working in his logging business.

“He gave me a job,” Pelland says. “I was running a C4 Tree Farmer

cable skidder. The snow would be up to my waist, so I’d grab a hold of the chokers and I’d jump off the back tires as far as I could go. My dad about had a cow when I told him I was going to work in the woods. He wanted me to be an accountant or something. But this is what I wanted to do.”

There was a bonus to working in the woods. Wright had a daughter, Dawn, who was a year behind Mike at Indus High. A couple of years later, Mike and Dawn were married, and as a result, Mike’s role with the company changed.

“Raymond decided that I should be home every night instead of staying out in the woods,” Mike recalls, “so he had me drive truck.”

In the meantime, Mike’s older brothers, Larry, Curt, and Gene, had all gone to work in their dad’s logging business. By 1977, father Ira had retired, and the brothers asked Mike to join them in Pelland Brothers Chipping and Hauling, chipping tops and limbs for various loggers in the area, delivering the chips to the Boise mill in International Falls, as well as the nearby Insulite plant.

In the ‘80s, the Insulite plant

**M**ike Pelland Sr.’s actual name is Wallace Ernie Pelland. Why does everyone call him Mike?

“When I was born, my dad wanted to name me Mike, but my mother wanted to name me after two dead uncles: Uncle Wallace and Uncle Ernie. My mom beat my dad to the birth certificate, so my legal name became Wallace Ernie. But my dad called me Mike anyhow, and that’s what everyone called me. I didn’t know my real name wasn’t Mike until I was in the fourth grade.”



**Pelland Logging utilizes dual tires on the back of this John Deere 748H skidder in order to be lighter on the ground, even in winter.**

closed, and the Pellands added a conventional logging operation, supplying Boise with timber. By 1990, brother Curt had started a welding shop in town with his son. A few years after that, Gene was ready for a career change, and Larry didn't want to stick around if Gene wasn't going to be there. As a result, Mike bought their shares of the business, and started Pelland Logging.

"At that time," Mike says, "I went to talk to (Boise forester) Kenny Olson, and asked if my brothers quit, do I still have a contract? I finally sat down with my wife one night and said I'm too old and set in my ways to do anything else. So we gave it a shot. What's the worst that can happen?"

"I could've done something different, I'm sure. One time I went and filled out a job application for the mill when my brothers and I were together. We had just bought a 1996 John Deere skidder from Cam Hardwig. That was a big purchase for me. We paid \$90,000 for it, something like that, and then I got a phone call from Boise wanting me to come in for more interviews. Gosh, if he'd called three days earlier before we bought that skidder, I might have thought about it. But I thought about working in that plastics factory. I'm not sure I

could've done it."

It helped that Mike Jr. joined the business soon after. He'd graduated from Indus High in 1996, and went to school at Rainy River in the Falls. He had the opportunity to go to the Twin Cities to work in a friend's family beverage company, stocking soda machines. That lasted four months.

"The only thing I learned there," Mike Jr. laughs, "was road rage."

Soon he was back working with his dad at Pelland Logging, and

it's been an excellent partnership ever since.

As always, battling the ups and downs of winter logging conditions is a constant challenge. But with nearly fifty years of experience in the business, the Pellands have learned a thing or two about tweaking their equipment to make things work. Take the tires on their skidders, for example.

"We used to run 44-inch tires on our skidders," Mike says. "Well in the summertime, all a 44 does is make a wider rut. And it's harder to get through the trees and you can't miss a stump. So what we finally started doing is we bought duals from Pomp's Tire, and in the wintertime when we get into softwoods on lower ground, we'll put the duals on and as soon as we get out and get into the hardwood again, we'll take the duals off. You'd be surprised, we had one skidder with 44s on it, and our other skidder, a Timberjack, had duals on the back. The operator ran both, and he said, 'boy the ground got harder' when he used the Timberjack. Well, the Timberjack is heavier. But look at the width of the tires. It made a huge difference."

That line of thinking—to be as light on the ground as possible—led the elder Pelland to agree to give the cut-to-length machines a try. They're hoping the new machines will help them access wood they haven't been able to get to during the last two warm winters. Mike

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Gerald Jones works in black spruce with a newly purchased Ponsse Ergo cut-to-length processor.

Jr. was the driving force behind the transition, but he had to convince his father to make the move.

"I talked to a guy 20 years ago, who had a processor and was selling

it," Mike Sr. says. "I asked him if he was going to buy another one, and he said he'd never do it. So I kind of figured to myself, the day I have a processor on my job, I'll quit. Well,

we've had kind of a tough time with the weather the last couple of years, it's been really bad. This summer, we sat a lot. We didn't get much wood yarded out. So Michael



Mike Pelland Jr. operates the John Deere 101 cut-to-length forwarder, piling harvested black spruce pulp for hauling to the mill.

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started pushing this processor and forwarder thing, and we did a lot of research. I mean he was looking into machines, and we were calling dealerships. We went down to Wisconsin twice, and we demo-ed machines from both Ponsse and John Deere. Both companies were really good. Actually, we liked the Ponsse processor and the John Deere forwarder, so that's what we bought."

The Pellands took delivery on the machines in the fall. Mike Jr. operates the John Deere 1010 forwarder, while Gerald Jones runs the Ponsse Ergo processor. Although the winter of 2018 has so far been much colder, the new machines have already come in handy.

"Two years ago we were on this site," Mike Sr. says, "and we cut the popple in the summer, but it was too warm in the winter and we couldn't get at the spruce. So now the processor crew went in there and we're cutting that this winter."

The Pellands are also hopeful the cut-to-length machines will allow them to get jobs thinning pine that they haven't been able to do before.

"I've bought some pine because

I know there are going to be dry spells," Mike Sr. says. "We never would have thought of doing that before"

"I like cut-to-length," Mike Jr. says, "because I hope we're going to get longer months out of operating seasons. Before, we were limited to just our conventional stuff. Now we're getting into thinnings, and it's adding months of operation. Last fall when the conventional crew was shut down for a few days, we were still going with the cut to length. That's what spurred the whole thing. The last two winters were horrible, and the amount of production we got, the amount of money we threw out, just trying to update equipment, keep employees around, and keep working, when you're only working ten months in two years, it's not enough."

"If we continue to have the cold weather," Mike Sr. says, "this winter will be 100% better than the last couple."

The conventional crew is winding up work on the Molpus site, where they began working three years ago. Originally there were five cutting blocks in all, one as large as 5000 cords. Now that the aspen portion

is complete, 600 cords of spruce remain, with the cut-to-length processor harvesting some, while the conventional feller buncher was able to access a portion of the spruce as well. Once harvested, the pulp will be hauled to PCA's International Falls mill and the bolts to Potlatch in Bemidji. The cut-to-length machines have already headed to the adjacent state sale while the conventional crew finishes up. In fact, so far the conventional and cut-to-length crews have been almost exclusively on separate harvest sites.

"This is the first time they have both been on the same site," Mike Sr. says. "Otherwise they've been separated."

The Pellands say they're pleased with their crew and their hard work. In addition to Jones and Mike Jr. on the cut-to-length side, Dwight Swang operates the feller buncher, Bob Morrison runs the delimeter, Jeff Olerking drives skidder, and Albert Moe slashes and loads trucks. The Pellands also have four drivers—Troy Mann, Allen Mann, Steve Grotberg, and Billy Warren—and they'll also have James Kennedy Trucking and Rod Burmeister haul



Albert Moe operates Pelland Logging's Barko 495B slasher-loader.

when extra capacity is needed. As for Mike Sr., he'll fill in where he's needed.

"Sometimes I'll slash, sometimes I'll build roads, sometimes I chase for parts," he says. "I just do everything nobody else can do."

While the Pellands are having a good year business-wise, the past couple of years have been challenging in ways other than the warm temperatures. His brother Larry died of cancer over the summer. That's after brother Gene lost a battle to cancer two years ago. In addition, Curt's wife was diagnosed with ALS, and Mike's wife Dawn continues to recover from two broken legs suffered in a car accident two years ago.

For his part, Mike Sr. is ready to transition the business to his son. He isn't ready to retire completely; he and Dawn still live on land that used to belong to his grandfather, the founder of the town of Pelland, along the Littlefork River. He's turning 65 this year, and Mike Jr. is 40, so it's a good time to hand over control. But completely stop working in the woods? Never.

"I don't ever want to retire," Mike says. "We're planning on a smooth transition."



Black spruce pulp from Pelland's harvest site waits to be loaded onto trucks and hauled to PCA's mill in International Falls.



Pelland Logging's stroke delimeter is a Komatsu PC 200 LC with Propac.

# Changes to SFIA Program Released

**T**he Minnesota Department of Revenue, in association with the DNR, have released information pertaining to legislative changes in the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act during the 2017 session.

SFIA provides incentive payments to encourage sustainable use of forest lands. Property owners with qualifying lands are eligible to enroll in the program, and can receive a payment for each acre of qualifying land they enroll in SFIA. In return, landowners agree not to develop the land and to follow a forest management plan while in the program.

Among the key changes from the 2017 legislation:

- The Minnesota Department of Revenue and DNR now jointly administer the SFIA program. As before, Revenue handles SFIA applications, payments, and penalties. DNR will handle forest management plans, monitoring, and land eligibility.
- SFIA payment rates (per acre) may increase.
- Landowners may choose from three covenant lengths – 8, 20, or 50 years. Payment rates increase with the covenant length. Until now, only 8-year covenants were allowed.
- Landowners must have a forest management plan registered with DNR to receive SFIA payments.
- Penalties have increased for violating the covenant including, but not limited to, building a structure or changing land use.

Landowners already enrolled in SFIA who want to keep their current 8-year covenant and have a current management plan don't need to take other action. Otherwise, visit the Department of Revenue's SFIA website at <http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/individuals/sfia/Pages/tax-information.aspx> to learn how to change the covenant length.

Payment rates at the various covenant lengths are also listed on the website.



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# Logger of the Year Nominations Being Accepted

**T**he Minnesota Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Program Implementation Committee is now accepting nominations for the 2018 Logger of the Year Award.

The award is designed to recognize outstanding independent logging contractor performance, increase the visibility of competent professional independent logging contractors within the forestry community, encourage independent logging contractors to emulate the outstanding performance of award winners, and improve forester-logger-landowner relations by publicly recognizing outstanding logging performance as an essential element of every planned timber harvest.

Among the areas in which nominees will be evaluated are safety, forest management, timber

harvesting practices, and business management, as well as community involvement.

The winning logger will receive a \$500 cash award and the "2018 Logger of the Year" plaque. In addition, this year's honoree will be nominated for FRA's Regional and National Logger of the Year awards.

Previous Minnesota winners include:

- 2017-Dobbs Logging
- 2016-Hasbargen Logging
- 2015-Greg Cook Logging, Inc.
- 2014-Scheff Logging
- 2013- Rolle Logging
- 2012- Erickson Timber
- 2011- M&R Chips
- 2010- Lovdahl & Sons LLC
- 2009- Berthiaume Logging LLC
- 2008- Pittack Logging, Inc.
- 2007- McCabe Forest Products
- 2006- Rieger Logging, Inc.

Nomination forms can be obtained through the MN SFI Implementation Committee office by calling 218-722-5013. **Nominations are due March 9, 2018.** The winner will be notified in April and the award will be presented at the MLEP Logger Conferences.

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# Itasca County Fairgrounds to host 65th Expo

**T**he North Star Expo is returning to the Itasca County Fairgrounds in Grand Rapids for its 2018 event.

The 65th annual Expo will be held September 14 and 15, and will again include the latest in logging equipment from all of the region's top vendors.

The Expo's return to Grand Rapids comes on the heels of a successful event at the Itasca County Fairgrounds in 2017, which saw significant increases in the number of vendors and visitors over previous years.

"Grand Rapids always rolls out the red carpet for the Expo, and we're happy to be back at the Itasca County Fairgrounds," said TPA Expo committee Chair Chad Lovdahl. "Last year's event was the biggest we've had in several years, and we look forward to another great event this year."

Vendor registration will begin later this spring when registration packets are sent out. For more information, call the TPA office at (218) 722-5013, or visit [mntimberproducers.com](http://mntimberproducers.com) and click on the North Star Expo button.

  
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A bird's eye view of Best Load Entries at the North Star Expo. The event returns to the Itasca County Fairgrounds in Grand Rapids in September.

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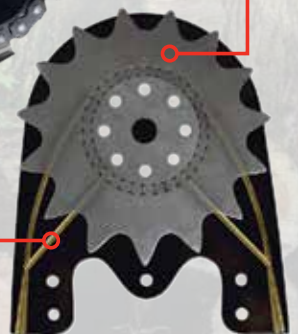
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# Minnesota's Logging Businesses: An Update

**M**innesota logging businesses are harvesting more timber during the winter months, and 37% of Minnesota loggers say they've seen their profitability improve over the previous three years. Those were among the preliminary findings in a survey of Minnesota logging businesses owners conducted last year.

The survey was sponsored by the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Logger Education Program, and Minnesota Forest Industries, with in-kind support from the U.S. Forest Service. Logging business owners have been surveyed several times since the late 1970s to assess the health of the industry. For that reason, the most recent survey assessed the status of businesses in 2016. Prior to 2016, the last survey was conducted to learn about businesses in 2011. Highlights from the 2016 assessment are presented below in terms of basic characteristics of respondents, their perspectives on their production and profitability in 2016, and their thoughts about the future of their business.

## Basic characteristics

The survey included several questions about the characteristics of the business including volume harvested in 2016, in-woods fuel consumption, years the company had been in business, felling method, volume produced per season, stumpage sources by type of landowner, and their equipment.

A total of 140 businesses responded to the survey, an overall response rate of 39 percent. Respondents reported harvesting 1.476 million cords in 2016, an average of 11,250 cords (median 4,000 cords) per respondent or 51 percent of the statewide harvest reported by the Minnesota DNR for 2016. In 2011, the average respondent produced 9,500 cords. Respondents had been in business an average of 30.5 years, continuing

a trend of aging businesses.

Another trend which continued from the past was that there are many smaller-volume-producing businesses and relatively few larger businesses:

- 56% of the businesses produced as many as 5,000 cords, accounting for 9% of the total volume reported.
- The 18% of respondents who produced more than 15,000 cords accounted for 68% of the reported volume.

The survey also asked for responses pertaining to harvesting equipment:

- 74% of the volume was felled using a feller-buncher
- 24% used a cut-to-length harvester
- 2% used a chainsaw. Fifty-three percent of the volume was harvested during the winter, continuing a trend of increasing winter harvesting. The average respondent used 1.55 gallons per cord in-woods.

Survey answers pertaining to ownership of stumpage:

- The Minnesota DNR and the various county land departments provided 51% of the harvested volume.
- Family forest landowners provided 20% of the reported volume. Those family forests were very important to businesses which harvest up to 1,000 cords but less so, as a percentage of their total procurement, for larger businesses.

Survey responses indicated that logging businesses replace equipment for a variety of reasons to maintain productivity within their operation. While business that produced up to 1,000 cords annually continued to maintain the oldest equipment, the average age of their newest piece of felling equipment changed from 26 to 21 years. In contrast, the average age of the newest piece of felling equipment

remained unchanged at 5 years for businesses that produced more than 20,000 cords. Approximately three-quarters of planned equipment replacements will be to replace

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# When it's Time For A Break



This chair sawed into a stump was spotted on a recent timber harvest near Willow River, created by an enterprising logger who was thinking ahead to when he might have a moment to relax.

existing equipment, generally with pre-owned equipment.

## Perspectives on their production and profitability in 2016

To better understand how respondents thought their business performed in 2016, the survey contained questions about the extent to which the business operated at full capacity, additional capability of the business if they didn't operate at full capacity, their break-even volume and an overall assessment of profitability.

A business operates at full capacity when its current equipment, workers, capital and other resources are producing at their full potential. Thirty-five percent of the businesses reported that they operated at full capacity in 2016. The highest percentage of respondents who operated at full capacity harvested either 5,001 – 10,000 cords or more than 15,000 cords in 2016. For the businesses who reported having excess capacity, they could have produced nearly 5,400 more cords on average (median 3,000 cords). Businesses which produced at least 5,000 cords

in 2016 were most likely to report that they broke even in 2016.

Having ready access to capital to fuel business growth and job creation will help a business succeed. While there was general agreement across all volume categories that access to capital in 2016 was neither easy nor hard or even more accessible, businesses which harvested 5,001–10,000 cords or more than 15,000 cords in 2016 reported the easiest access to capital.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents said that their profitability was good or excellent in 2016 and 26 percent said that it was poor or very poor. When asked to compare their profitability in 2016 to 2013, the average respondent said that it was the same.

## Thoughts about the future

On average, only 20 percent of respondents indicated that they would encourage a member of their family or a close friend to become a logger. Of nine factors which were listed as potential reasons the respondent may have entered the logging business, enjoyment for the sense of independence

and for working outdoors and the sense of accomplishment logging provides were rated as being very to extremely important. The pay or wages received was the least important rated factor in their decision.

Twenty-seven percent of respondents don't expect to be in business in five years. While that percentage is comparable to what was reported for the 2011 survey (25 percent), the average volume produced by those businesses in 2016 is higher than was reported in 2011 (approximately 10,850 cords in 2016 vs. 5,750 cords in 2011).

If you have any questions about the survey results, feel free to contact Charlie Blinn at the University of Minnesota via email at [cblinn@umn.edu](mailto:cblinn@umn.edu), or by calling (612) 624-3788.

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# MN Forest Resources Council Names New Head

**H**ibbing native DeAnn Stish is the new executive director of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council, the state's advisory council on forestry.

Stish brings 25 years of environment and natural resource policy expertise to the council. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Minnesota-Duluth with a focus on Outdoor Studies and International Relations. She has served as environment and natural resource staff to the late United States Congressman Jim Oberstar and as Director of Congressional Affairs for the American Forest & Paper Association in Washington D.C. Stish was the president of Pickford Strategic Communications and has represented diverse interests ranging from private sector natural resource interests, to Minnesota Forest Industries. She served as director of the Lake States Healthy Forests Healthy Communities coalition and has administered a public/private regional advisory group created by the USDA focusing on federal contracts and forest procurement issues on U.S. Forest Service lands. She is a member of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, Ruffed Grouse Society, and the Capitol Chapter of Ducks Unlimited.

The role of the MFRC is to facilitate the development and implementation of various

forest programs with respect to Minnesota's forests – both public and private lands. However, a key role is to advise the state's governor, Legislature, local governments, congressional delegation and stakeholders on sustainable forest resource policies and practices. An independent entity within the state government, the council structure provides a critical, third-party oversight role evaluating the continued progress in achieving sustainable management of the state's forest resources under the guidance of the Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA).

Created by the Legislature in 1995, the SFRA established a number of innovative programs to promote the sustained use and enjoyment of the state's forest resources, including the creation of the MFRC. The SFRA recognizes a broad range of forest resource values -- ranging from outdoor recreation and wildlife, ensuring a steady and stable supply of timber for the forest products industry and a host of other priorities established in Minnesota Statute 89A. The SFRA reflects the state's far-reaching interests in the use, management and protection of its extensive and diverse forest landscape.

The MFRC consists of 16 individuals appointed by the governor, representing a range of forest resource interests including the Minnesota Department of



Natural Resources, counties, environment organizations, industry groups, the University of Minnesota's Forestry Department and one representative appointed by the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. A key ongoing function of the MFRC is to manage the ongoing development and implementation of site-level and landscape-level forest management programs.

"DeAnn comes to the council with extensive background in natural resource and environmental policy and administration from the halls of the U.S. Congress to our own State Capitol," said MFRC chair Kathleen Preece. "She is a highly respected policy professional and has expertise in forest management planning on the state and federal level, forest certification, forest economics and the interdependency of our Minnesota's many forest values. We are extremely fortunate to have DeAnn in this role for our state."



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# MnDOT Tries New Deicing Substance

**M**nDOT recently increased its use of potassium acetate, a less corrosive solution than salt for melting ice and snow on roads and highways.

Several years ago, TPA's Transportation Committee, chaired by Jerry Demenge, met with MnDOT officials to express

## Timber Talk

concern about the corrosive nature of the magnesium chloride used by the agency. Demenge pointed out

that the undercarriages of trucks were being damaged by the substance, including the fact that he was seeing corroded brake lines. At the time, MnDOT's Duane Hill said he'd seen similar damage to MnDOT's fleet of trucks and the agency was interested in finding something different. MnDOT had experimented with less corrosive substances like potassium acetate, but it was over five times more expensive than salt. However, as the price has come down, MnDOT has begun using it more.

"Potassium acetate used to be seven to eight bucks per gallon, as opposed to \$1.40 per gallon for magnesium chloride, or less than a buck for salt brine we mix ourselves," Hill said. "The price of potassium acetate recently came down to just over four dollars per gallon, so we're at the point where we can afford to use it more."

Potassium acetate is preferred for deicing airport runways because it is less corrosive than salt substances. MnDOT has been trying potassium acetate in downtown Duluth over the last three winters. This year, they're expanding its use to some highways, including I-35, I-535 and US 2 in the Duluth area, as well as on Highway 53 in Virginia and I-35 near Cloquet.

Potassium acetate also has environmental advantages. Salt substances get into water sources as



it runs off. MnDOT says potassium acetate appears to have less of an environmental impact, but the agency is continuing to study it.

## Wood Yard Safety Stressed

**M**ill facilities have expressed concern over a handful of mishaps in their woodyards since the winter logging season began. Two of these incidents involved railroad crossings on mill property, and two others pertained to slips and falls from logging trucks. Of course, these aren't the only dangers involved with unloading timber at mill facilities. All TPA members are asked to remind their

haulers—whether they're drivers who are direct employees of your business, or independent truckers you've hired to haul timber—about the many potential hazards while delivering wood, and to stress their safety. We all want all of the folks who work in our industry to return home safely each night after performing a job well done.

A few years ago, TPA produced a video in association with MLEP and the Forest Resources Association (FRA) on the topic of woodyard safety. There's a link to it on our webpage at [www.mntimberproducers.com](http://www.mntimberproducers.com), and it can also be found on YouTube. It's just under ten minutes in length and covers a variety of scenarios pertaining to wood yard safety.



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# On the Markets

**T**he *Timber Bulletin* publishes information regarding results of a sampling of recent timber sales and other market indicators, as well as other market-related news items.

## Recent Timber Sales Average prices, as reported by each agency

### Agency Regular Intermediate

#### DNR—Bemidji Area

*December 12—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$36.49	\$36.01
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$31.42	\$29.47
Pine Species (WMP)	\$52.61	\$29.10
Tamarack (WC)	\$ 9.71	\$11.40

21 of the 26 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### DNR—Backus Area

*December 13—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$38.05	\$42.58
Paper Birch (WMP)	\$13.01	\$21.04
Red Oak (WMP)	\$17.14	\$29.10

11 of the 12 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### Carlton County

*December 14—Oral Auction*

Aspen	\$38.59	NA
Norway Pine P/B	\$42.10	NA
Nrthrn Hrdwds	\$12.60	NA

All 5 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### DNR—Cloquet Area

*December 14—Oral Auction*

Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$37.63	\$31.62
Aspen Species (WC)	NA	\$22.07
White Spruce (WMP)	\$ 8.68	\$29.36
Paper Birch (WMP)	NA	\$12.07

6 of the 9 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### DNR—Warroad Area

*December 14—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$23.13	\$16.47
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Pine Species (WMP)	\$35.97	\$26.06
Jack Pine (WMP)	\$20.61	\$33.02

42 of the 44 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### DNR—Tower Area

*December 19—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$37.12	\$25.40
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$22.76	\$33.69
Pine Species (WMP)	\$35.78	\$17.47

11 of the 20 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### DNR—NW Region

*December 19—Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$37.15	\$31.13
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$43.62	\$35.92
Oak Species (WMP)	\$42.21	NA
Jack Pine (WMP)	\$36.94	\$34.18

28 of the 37 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### Cass County

*December 20—Oral Auction*

Aspen	\$39.23	\$27.31
Red Oak	NA	\$42.58
Ash	\$10.00	NA

All 7 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### Hubbard County

*January 8—Oral Auction*

Aspen Pulp	NA	\$43.85
Aspen Mixed	NA	\$38.93
Birch Pulp	NA	\$13.39

All 12 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### Lake County

*January 10—Sealed Bid*

Aspen P&B	NA	\$22.57
Birch P&B	NA	\$10.18
Maple P&B	NA	\$10.72

9 of the 26 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### DNR—Central Region

*January 17—Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$23.72	\$29.28
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$21.86	\$15.40
Norway Pine (WMP)	\$73.72	\$25.18

9 of the 24 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### DNR—NE Region

*January 17—Sealed Bid*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$31.94	\$38.07
Pine Species (WMP)	\$39.18	\$71.64
Mixed Spruce (WMP)	\$22.40	\$24.40
Jack Pine (WMP)	\$30.30	\$15.75
Norway Pine (WMP)	\$58.30	\$68.93

15 of the 25 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### DNR—Two Harbors Area

*January 25—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$30.30	\$23.60
Trembling Aspen (WC)	\$ 9.22	NA
Norway Pine (WMP)	\$15.23	NA
Mixed Spruce (WMP)	NA	\$12.86

6 of the 10 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### Cass County

*January 25—Oral Auction*

Aspen	\$40.68	\$28.51
Jack Pine	\$19.50	\$18.00
Maple	\$24.72	\$21.66

6 of the 7 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### Koochiching County

*February 7—Oral Auction*

Aspen P&B	\$33.17	\$34.57
Spruce P&B	\$18.19	\$19.98
Balsam P&B	\$ 9.31	\$11.95
Ash P&B	\$ 6.46	\$ 6.00

22 of the 23 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### DNR—Sandstone Area

*February 9—Oral Auction*

Aspen Species (WC)	\$32.80	\$28.72
Red Oak (WMP)	\$16.40	\$20.92
Norway Pine (WMP)	\$35.22	\$31.98

7 of the 13 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

#### St. Louis County

*February 15—Sealed Bid*

Aspen Pulpwood	\$37.05	NA
Blk Spruce Pulpwood	\$24.28	NA
Balsam Fir Pulpwood	\$14.09	NA
Birch Pulpwood	\$15.61	NA

Red Maple  
Pulpwood \$15.83 NA  
18 of the 24 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**Koochiching County**  
November 15—Oral Auction

Aspen P/B \$32.99 \$36.91  
Spruce P/B \$20.44 \$22.13  
Balsam P/B \$11.37 \$11.89  
28 of the 31 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**DNR—Baudette Area**  
November 21—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (WC) \$35.75 \$31.08  
Black Spruce (WC) \$29.01 \$12.49  
Jack Pine (WMP) \$26.14 \$12.78  
Norway Pine (WMP) \$50.16 \$16.91

14 of the 15 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**Cass County**  
November 30—Sealed Bid

Aspen \$46.68 \$22.68  
Birch \$25.60 \$10.40  
Red Oak \$26.72 \$13.43

All 6 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**DNR—Hibbing Area**  
November 30—Sealed Bid

Trembling Aspen (WC) \$43.09 \$45.48  
Pine Species (WMP) \$38.51 \$36.23  
Balsam Fir (WC) \$23.80 \$19.99  
Nrdthn Hrdwds (WC) \$13.07 \$19.00

11 of the 12 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**Itasca County**  
December 1—Oral Auction

Aspen \$35.04 NA  
Red Pine \$52.34 NA  
White Spruce \$15.01 NA  
Balsam \$17.85 NA  
Maple \$ 9.94 NA  
Paper Birch \$12.75 NA

Data above is for the regular and intermediate auctions combined, as reported by the county. 45 of the 51 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**Aitkin County**  
December 4—Oral Auction

Aspen Pulp \$32.40 NA  
Aspen P/B \$22.70 NA  
Oak P/B \$16.55 NA  
Maple P/B \$11.03 NA

22 of the 45 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**DNR—Aitkin Area**  
December 4—Oral Auction

Trembling Aspen (WC) \$28.70 NA  
Aspen Species (WC) \$26.35 \$36.36  
Aspen Species (WMP) NA \$41.11  
Norway Pine (WMP) NA \$46.53

11 of the 20 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**DNR—Backus and Deer River Areas**  
December 5—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (WC) \$40.11 \$39.26  
Norway Pine (WMP) \$23.96 \$38.74  
Balsam Fir (WC) \$16.25 \$23.57

All 23 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**DNR—Littlefork Area**  
December 6—Oral Auction

Aspen Species (WC) \$35.88 \$38.13  
Pine Species (WMP) \$48.13 \$50.96

Black Spruce (WC) \$13.03 \$15.15  
Mixed Spruce (WMP) \$50.97 \$31.86

20 of the 23 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**Beltrami County**  
December 5—Sealed Bid

Aspen Pulp \$33.05 NA  
Red Pine P&B \$35.43 NA  
Jack Pine P&B \$39.35 NA

All 9 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

**Beltrami County**  
December 7—Oral Auction

Aspen Pulp \$39.31 NA  
Red Pine Bolts \$66.63 NA  
Basswood P&B \$16.80 NA  
Maple Pulp \$14.61 NA

All 14 tracts offered during the sale were purchased.

Products:  
PB= Pulp and Bolts  
WMP= Woodsrun mixed Products  
WC= Woodsrun cordwood  
ST=Sawtimber  
WST=Woodsrun Sawtimber  
PW=Pulpwood  
SLV=Sawlogs/Veneer

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## LOGGERS OF THE PAST . . .

# The Hot Lunch Program

by J. C. Ryan

This story is reprinted from an earlier *Timber Bulletin*—one of the first of “Buzz” Ryan’s ever-popular contributions to these pages. The *Bulletin* will continue to reprint selected stories from the memories he recorded for us.—*Editor*



Today, whenever you see a group of workers going into the woods, you’ll see them carrying dinner pails or bag lunches. Coffee breaks in the morning and afternoon are a part of the working schedule.

It wasn’t that way in the old logging days. There was no such thing as a coffee break, and nobody carried a dinner pail. The old lumberjacks demanded a hot meal at noon – and he got it. As far as coffee breaks were concerned, if a man could not eat enough at breakfast to last him until the noon meal, he was considered a sissy and had no business being in a lumber camp. However, several men, even in those days, had a coffee break – like the handymen, blacksmiths and the barn bosses.

The walking boss saw that all the men could return to the camp for their noon meal if they were less than a mile from the cooking area. If they were out over a mile, a hot meal would be taken to them. In camp, a spot would be selected in a central

location where the teams were working, and a temporary table of poles would be set up and logs rolled together to form seats for the teamsters, cruisers, scalers, log inspectors and walking bosses who traveled camp to camp.

In railroad camps the crews that were late would also eat from the lunch table. This table was usually set up at the side of the kitchen area near the door as the cooks did not want these men tramping over their clean floors. The men who worked in the blacksmith shop, as well as the railroad crews, usually had considerable coal dust on their feet and clothing, and it was the cook’s desire to keep them as close to the door as possible.

When the crew was to be fed away from the camp, the straw boss would have one of the men build a fire so it would be burned down enough to prevent smoking when the crew arrived to eat. The lunch sleigh would arrive on time with a hot meal that had left the kitchen only 20 minutes before.

These small lunch sleighs, usually a “swingdingle,” had a box lined with blankets or padded in some way to keep the food warm. Shelves were made for pies, cakes and kettles. Special “camp kettles” were used for baked beans, boiled potatoes, gravy, roast beef and all hot dishes. This food arrived at the dinner site steaming hot. Pies had been placed in the lunch sleigh just as they came out of the oven, and often were so hot one had to wait a few minutes before eating them.

Whether in camp or out, the men formed a line with their plates and received their food much as one would do in the modern smorgasbord. Coffee and tea were the only drinking items made at the lunch site, and the man tending the fire usually had them boiling by the time the lunch sleigh arrived. Out of camp, if the dinner grounds were in an open area, a crew would cut small trees and stick them in the ground to provide shelter from the wind while the men ate. The horses were driven to an area adjoining the site and were well blanketed and given their oats in a box or pail and also a little hay.

The only time lunches were carried was during the log drives, and each man was issued what was known as a “nose bag,” a little canvas bag that he slung over his shoulder. Sometimes, he took enough food to last him 24 hours. Often a river driver would be sent downriver to watch a bend when logs were running and could not be relieved until all the logs had passed. It would often take 24 hours or more for the logs to make their journey when the river was high. Carrying a “nose bag” was expected while on the log drives.

After the cedar and tie camps came into being and the cutting was done by “piece makers,” they started to carry their lunches to the woods individually. In some smaller camps, no noon meal was served in camp at all. However, in the old logging days, three warm meals a day were in order and “dinnering out” was the exception, not the rule. When they did have a dinner out, the meal was kept just as near the type of meal served in the camp as possible. Lumberjacks just had to have good food.

**Dinnering out:** Lunch time in the woods began at 11:30, usually lasted a half hour.





A cookee brought food to the woods in a lunch sleigh called a swing-dingle – built with runners close up in front to avoid brush and gilpokes. The swing-dingle had shelves and partitions to hold food containers and gear and was lined with blankets to keep food hot. Fires were ready, logs were laid out for seating and the crew and lunch arrived at the spot at the same time. Horses were watered, if possible, and blanketed while they were fed oats and hay.



# Classifieds

To serve our readers better, the Timber Bulletin offers free classified ads of up to 85 words to all members and associate members of the Minnesota Timber Producers Association. All ads must be submitted in writing to the Association office. The MTPA assumes no responsibility for ad contents and accepts free ads on a first-come, first-served basis within space limitations.

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